walkBoston

Pedestrians and large suburban/non-downtown projects

1. Who we are/what we do
2. Reviewing local projects
3. Case studies
4. Pedestrian opportunities
5. Pedestrians at the heart of green building

1.
who we are/what we do

Making communities more walkable

WalkBoston encourages walking throughout Massachusetts for transportation, health and vibrant communities. Our education and advocacy programs give voice to citizens to make their communities walkable.

Improving the walking environment

Safe Routes to School [SRTS]

2.
reviewing local projects

Our points of entry

- MA environmental review process
- local and state permitting

What we review

- mixed-use projects
- smart growth projects
- projects that tout their pedestrian elements
- transportation projects
- major institutional expansions
- projects at important pedestrian locations

Issues we look for

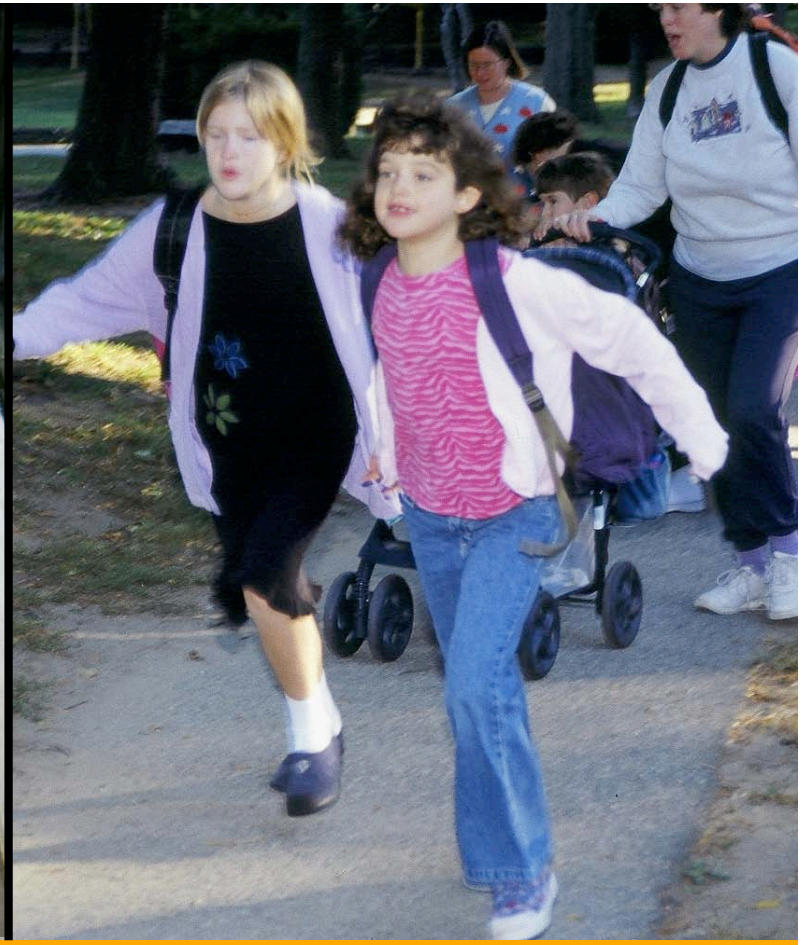
- safe, attractive pedestrian features
- connectivity to existing or future pedestrian network
- access to transit
- mix and relationship of uses

Continuous sidewalks

- Boston, MA Intercontinental Hotel
- peds shouldn’t have to walk out of their way, sidewalks are not for cars

Safe, attractive pedestrian features

- wide, smooth, level sidewalks
- buffer between sidewalks and heavy traffic
- safe street crossings
- street trees, furniture, and landscaping
- minimize curb cuts
- calm traffic with narrow lanes, on-street parking, raised crosswalks, tight curb radii
- contribute funds to major elements such as bridges



Connectivity

- build sidewalks along interior and exterior streets
- fill in gaps in the network
- connect to nearby paths, trails, sidewalks
- connect to schools, shopping, elder housing, etc.
- plan for the future

Transit — a key to lower carbon footprint

- provide safe access to transit via sidewalks or paths
- locate bus stops/shelters to maximize usage
- locate dense development close to transit
- manage lighting, snow clearance, maintenance with transit provider to ensure year-round use

Mix and relationship of land uses

- design buildings to support a mix of tenants and uses
- concentrated development is more walkable
- provide pedestrian links to adjacent uses
- promote development that fronts the pedestrian ways
- create safe walking routes within parking areas

3.
why we are concerned about MA smart growth projects - case studies

Note:
Projects are constantly evolving. The case studies capture projects at the moment in the permitting process when WalkBoston submitted its first comments

Current crop of smart growth/TOD/green projects

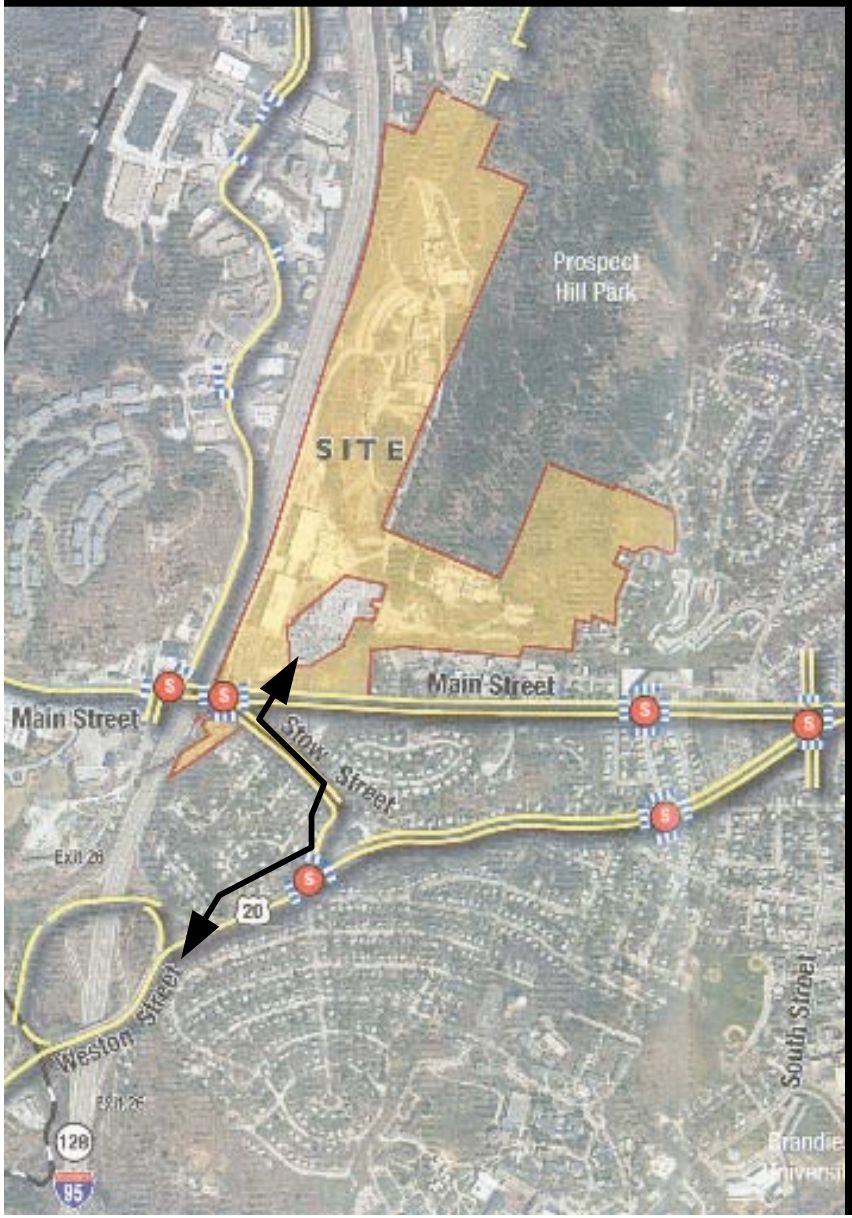
- downtown project reviews focused on site details and amenities
- non-downtown projects need great attention to peds & transit access to achieve smart growth objectives
- WalkBoston concerned that some proposals are not providing what is needed to achieve the promise of smart growth/green/TOD development

It is time to start a conversation about how state and local regulations can be used to make sure these large projects get it right

Case study locations

Map Source: Metropolitan Area Planning Council, www.mapc.org

The Commons at Prospect Hill — Waltham



- former Polaroid site
- 10 mi. from downtown Boston
- 1/2 mile from Route 128 interchange
- 120 acres —
  4,000’ along Route 128
  1,200’ along Route 117
- 1.69 million SF of office and retail in 11 buildings

Proposal

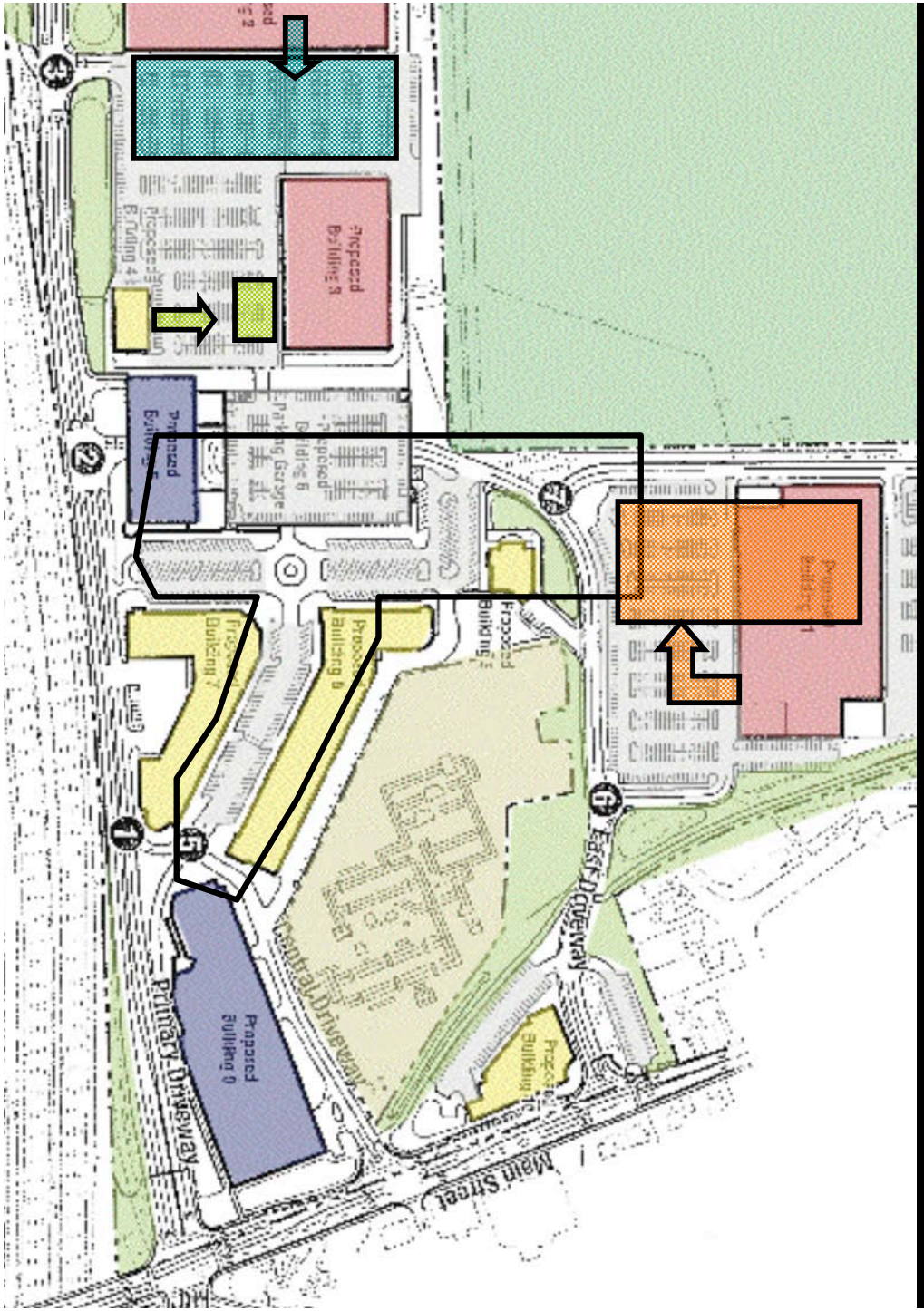
- 40 acres of dense dev. at site entrance on south, 60 acres of low-density in north & east
- 20 acres protected open space
- bus along Rte 117
- 1/2 mile of statewide rail-trail
- 3 vehicle access points
- parking: 2,541 garage spaces, 3,511 surface spaces
- adding direct highway ramps to Route 20/128

Safety recommendations

- reduce conflicts by clarifying customer & service entrances
- narrow core streets wherever possible
- redesign trail crossings
- improve safety at trail crossings
- provide safe walking routes through parking lots

Network recommendations

- fewer street crossings in site core
- physically/visually link components of ped network
  - rail-trail
  - transit access
  - walk/jog trails in park
- add wayfinding signs



Use recommendations

- create pedestrianized core
- remove some on-street parking
- group buildings closer together and extend sidewalks
- build foundations to allow future increases in density
- Rte 117 entrance should entice walking/bus use
- focus building entries on walking routes, not parking

Summary [projected 10% of trips transit/walk/bike]

NETWORKS

- incomplete pedestrian network
- did not take advantage of open space
- wayfinding difficult

BUILDING MIX

- highest densities are at the edges of the "pedestrian zone"

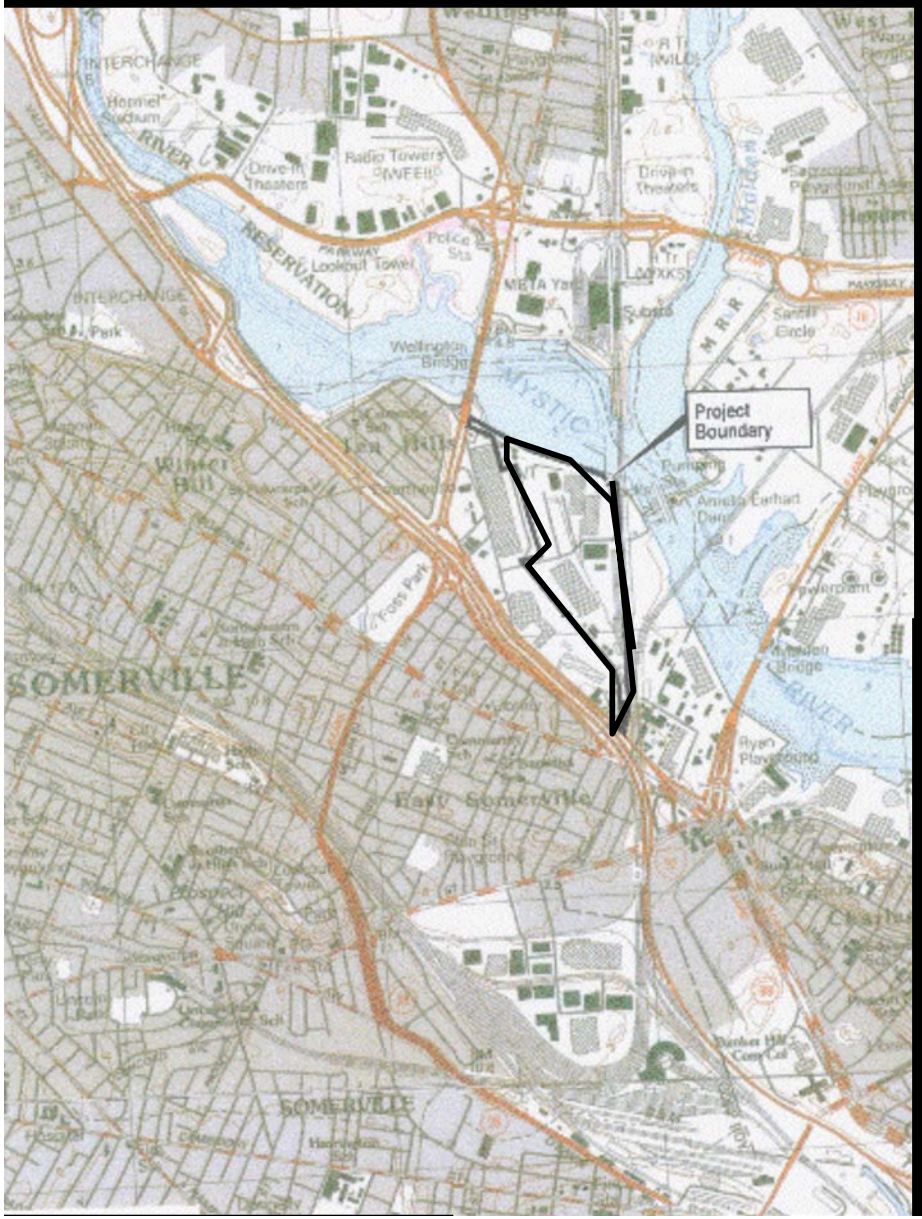
TRANSIT

- inadequate pedestrian connection to bus route

SAFETY

- reduce ped/vehicle conflicts at intersections
- protect pedestrians in parking lots

Assembly Square — Somerville



- 50 acre brownfield site
- 2 miles from Boston
- direct access to I-93
- 2,000’ Mystic River frontage
- 5.12 m SF total
  2,100 residences
  200 room hotel
- 9,174 parking spaces

Proposal

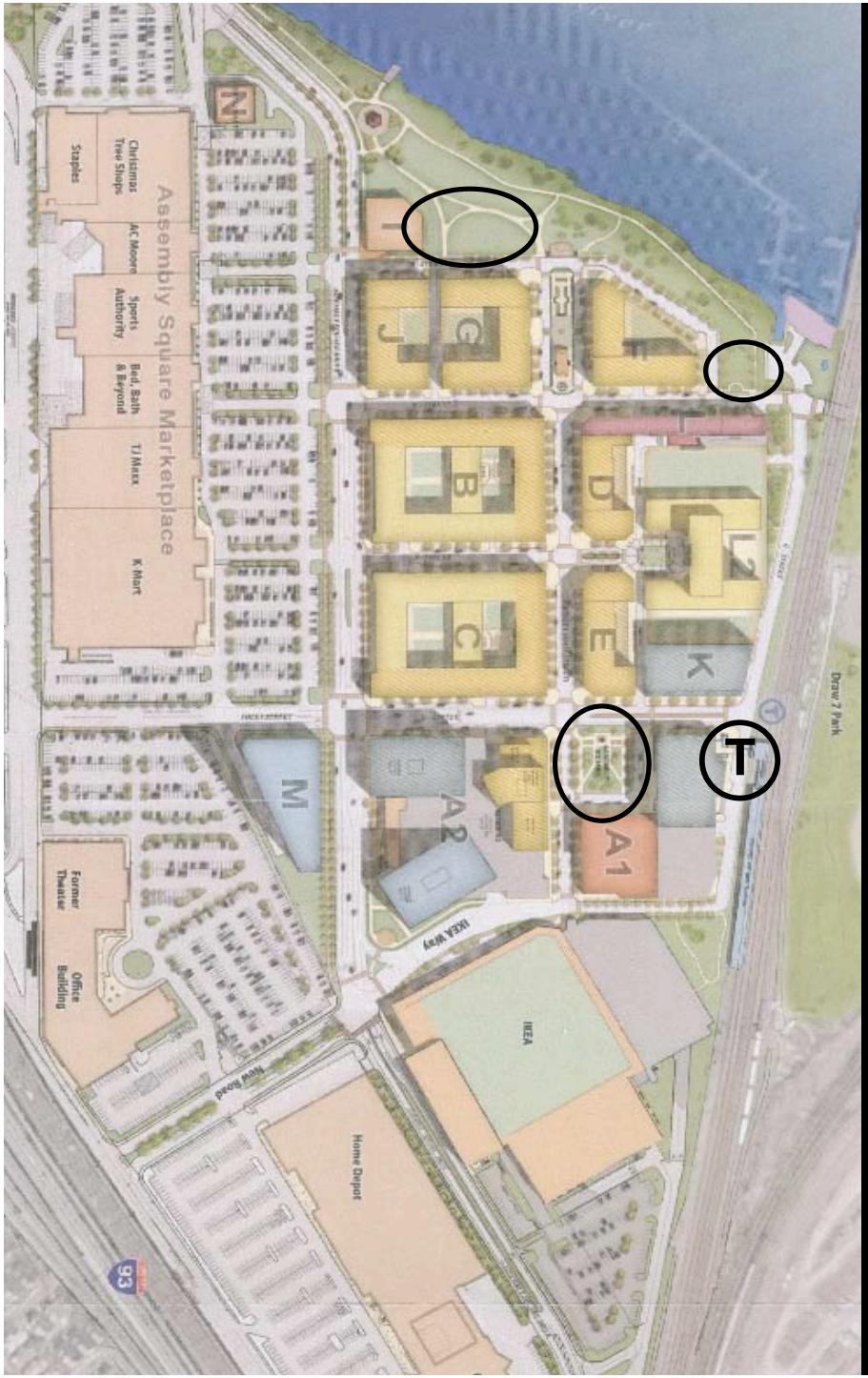
- dense urban site
- 18 buildings, 90’ — 250’ tall
- new Orange Line T station
- TOD
- 3.4 acres new open space
- Rte 28 ped/bike underpass
- ped connection under I-93

Network recommendations

- focus on river/riverfront path
- remove streets from riverfront
- improve internal ped connection to riverfront & transit station
- integrate site with large park east of T station
- improve ped connections to existing community (off-site)
- establish pedestrian foci & paths connecting them

Use recommendations

- focus site plan on T station & construct station in first phase of development to encourage transit use
- create clear visual and ped paths to T station and link T to proposed town squares/ meeting places
- maximize density of uses near station
- provide great space for public events along river



Sidewalk recommendations

- vary street widths with land use & traffic functions
- relate sidewalks and landscaping to street scale
- add pedestrian-friendly elements along each street
- add more open space for pedestrian meeting places & recreation

Summary [25% of trips via transit/walking]

NETWORKS

- ped & street network undifferentiated by level of use and function
- sidewalk landscaping should reflect anticipated uses

BUILDING MIX

- density should guide design of ped facilities
- little open space along streets throughout site

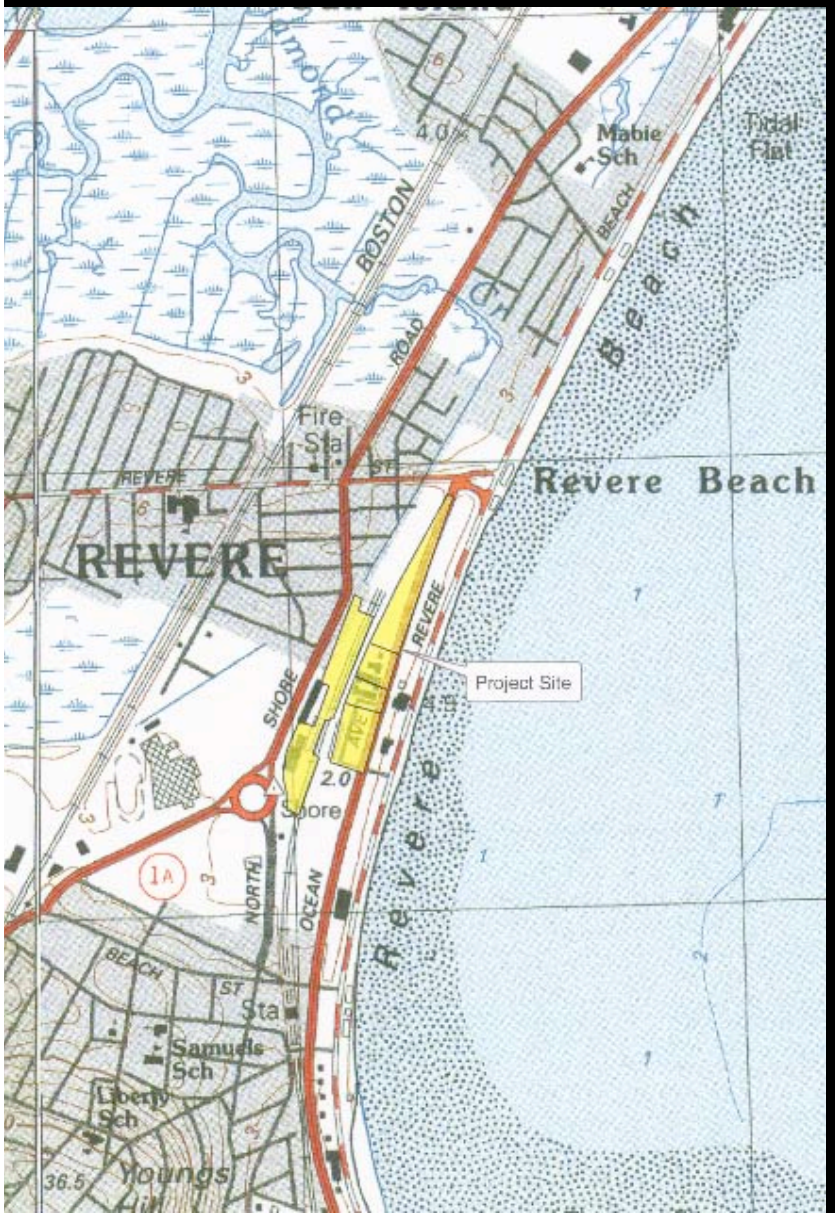
TRANSIT

- transit station should be focus of development
- unclear pedestrian paths to transit

SAFETY

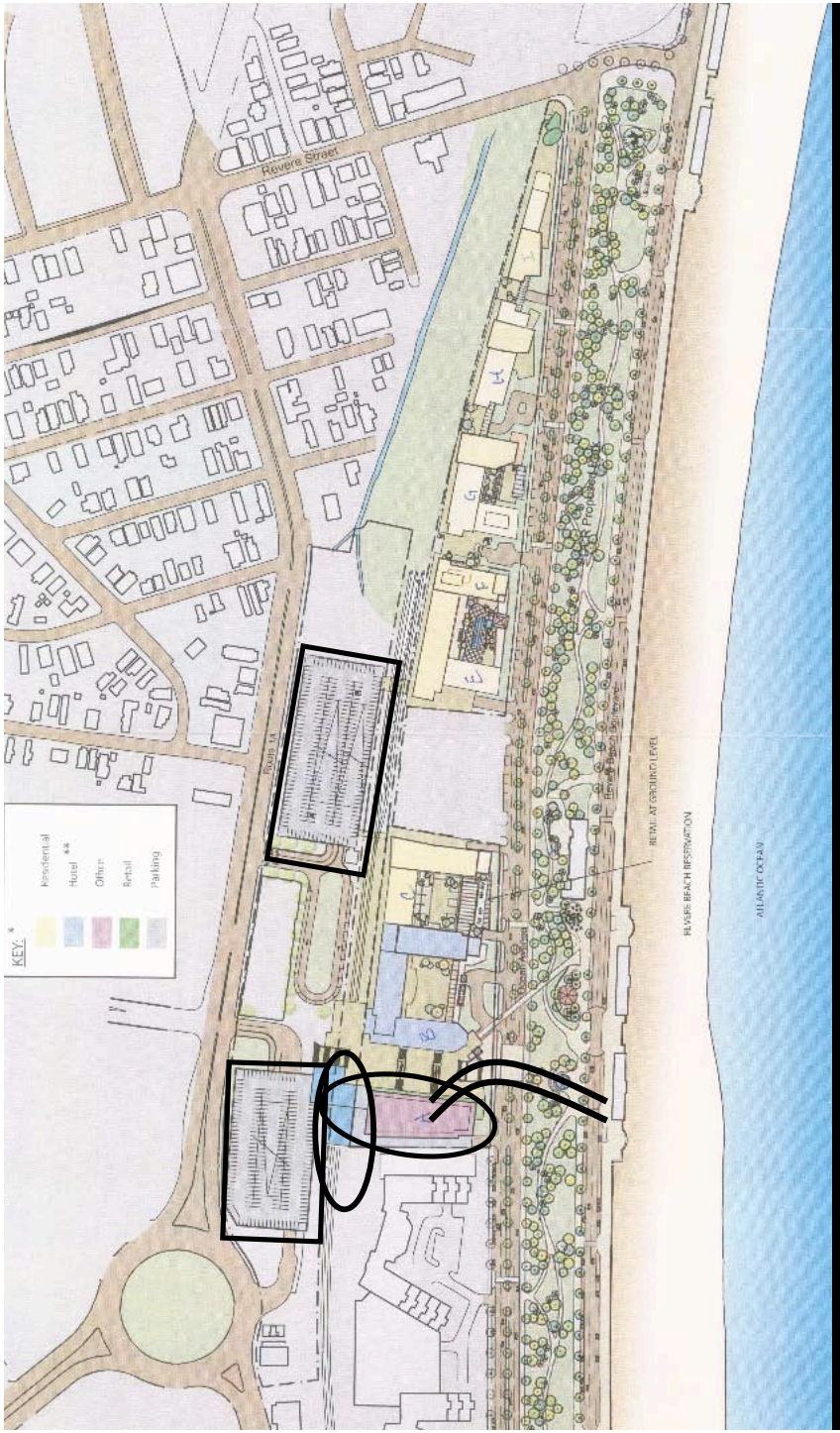
- need traffic calming or signals to protect peds

Waterfront Square — Revere



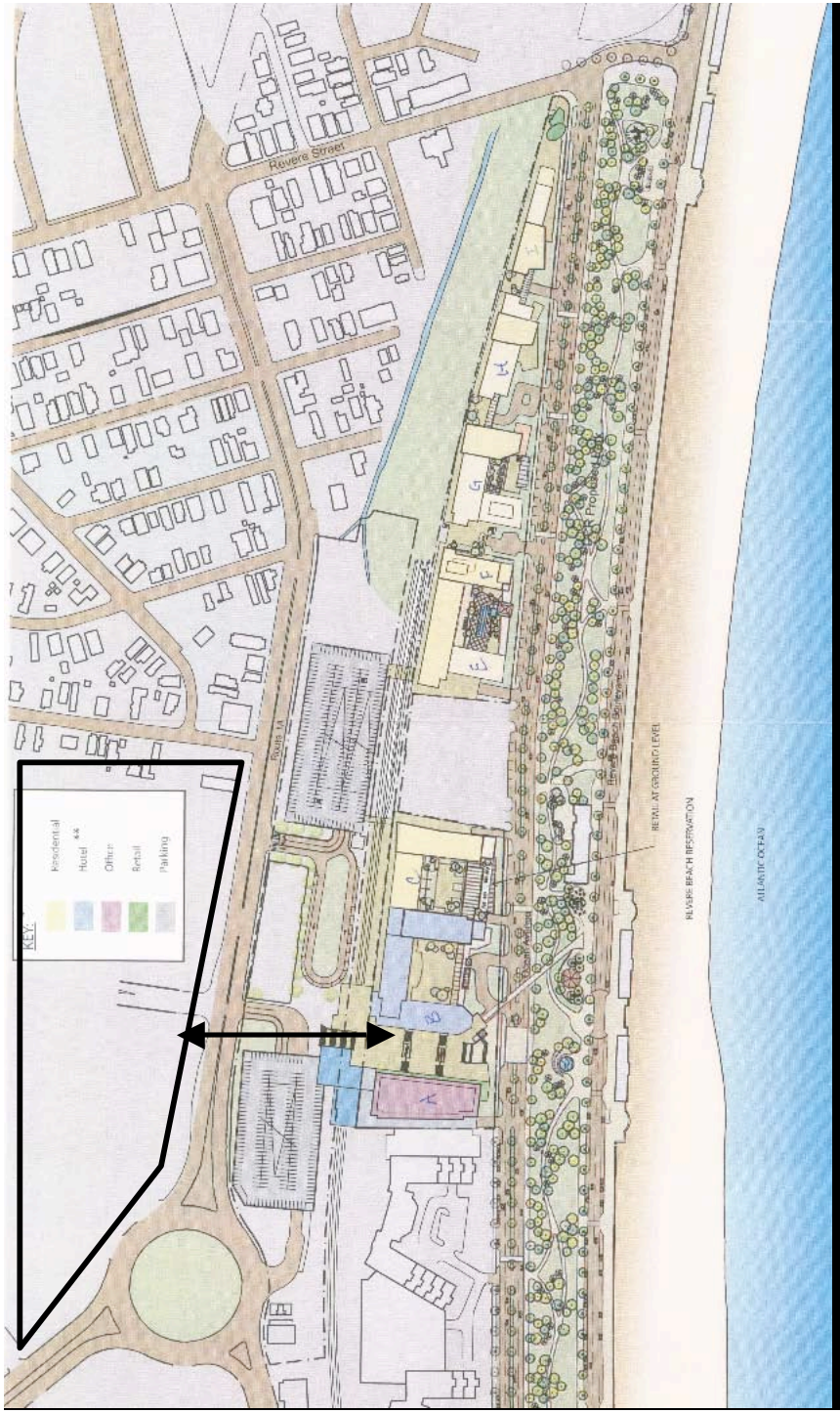
A better mousetrap…

- 16.4 acres
- 5 miles from Boston
- Route 1A and Ocean Ave. access
- 1/2 mile of oceanfront
- frontage on Revere Beach Reservation - undeveloped park 1/2 mile long, 150’ wide



Proposal

- 9 buildings, up to 8 stories
- 1.37 m SF of development
- offices; 902 residences; 100 hotel rooms
- 1,884 parking spaces
- 1/2 acre central plaza above existing transit station
- pedestrian bridge to park
- new busway at T station



Transit recommendations

- connect upper-level plaza to busway & across Rte 1A
- improve kiss-ride connections
- upgrade pedestrian safety at Route 1A
- plan for add'l development across Route 1A
- encourage walking along Ocean Ave.
- create strong visual connection between transit, plaza & ocean

Park recommendations

- introduce small parks along major N/S pedestrian walkways
- capitalize on pedestrian bridge to park
- provide good pedestrian links to oceanfront paths
- provide long term maintenance for ped bridge

Summary [29% of trips by transit/walking]

NETWORKS

- pedestrian network crosses few major streets
- lineal walkways connect buildings within site

BUILDING MIX

- highest densities around transit station
- plans allow expansion to west

TRANSIT

- transit station is central focus of development

AMENITIES

- pedestrian bridge to oceanfront
- development centered on major pedestrian plaza

4.
making the most of pedestrian opportunities in smart growth projects

A sampling of opportunities to increase walking

- site plan and network
- safety
- amenities
- operations and maintenance
- programs

Site plan and network

- build greatest density near transit
- continuous sidewalks to transit
- place main building entrances close to transit stops
- continuous sidewalk connections to adjacent uses
- sidewalks on both sides of streets

Safety

- safe pedestrian crossings along routes to transit (e.g., better/new signals, countdown signals)
- activate ground floors for “eyes on the street”
- minimize curb cuts, keep level sidewalks

Operations and maintenance

- snow/ice clearance between site & transit
- walking escort to public transit after dark
- exterior management plan and off-site commitments

Programs and information

- information about walking to/from the site for employees, residents & visitors
- on-site walking ambassadors
- small actions - e.g. make umbrellas available

4.
pedestrians need to be at the heart of smart growth

Why walking?

- transportation generates ~ 30% of greenhouse gas
- 1 mile not driven = 1 lb of carbon forgone
- there are good alternatives to driving
- walkable places = livable communities
- a good walking environment is crucial to promoting transit use

How can we increase role of peds in smart growth planning and regulation?

- Should the specificity of pedestrian-related design requirements be increased?
- Should state and local agencies provide increased guidance about good pedestrian design?
- What are the appropriate mechanisms to improve projects?

walkBoston

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